

Nanny



From grocery shopping to food creations; every creation takes preparation and the most important part is the preparation. This is what my grandmother taught me. She taught me that every step in preparing a meal took great thought and care. We would probably call this being mindful today, but back then necessity required you to be mindful every day. She wasn't my biological grandmother, but she was the only Grandmother I knew as a child. I called her Nanny.. My Nanny's kitchen was always warm and safe where there was a special stool for me to stand on so I could work next to her.

Each time I spent with Nanny, she shared her knowledge of details through her hands and her soft quiet voice. Like her chicken soup, which began the day before with me chasing the chickens in their pen and my grandfather running behind me being directed as to which one was the most perfect one for this soup. You see, it was never just a soup, it was creation filled with love and care and all things delicious.

Once we had the chicken, (which I always felt sad about but Nanny said the chicken was proud to be our dinner and I gladly bought that explanation) then, came the all the other ingredients from the garden, of course. Pulling out

leeks, onions, carrots and cutting the parsley and maybe dill, if there was any leftover from late summer; washing and cutting (I usually did the washing and helped with cutting). Everything was done thoughtfully, and put into the pot with fresh cold well water to simmer for at least 3 hours, then set aside to cool. Then she would remove the chicken and carefully take it apart keeping some for the soup and some for another meal. My favorite thing came next which was making the noodles to put into the soup, rolling out the dough to a thin consistency then slicing very thinly; mine were the fat ones in the pot as I had not mastered the art of steady hand noodle cutting. She would flour lightly then hang them to dry on a makeshift rack until it was time to cook them.

Next the butter dumplings, which were so good, created from fresh grated stale bread, dill and parsley and butter, fresh butter; all rolled into small balls that would also be dropped into the heavenly soup.

Before the family arrived I would help her set the table with all her precious things, starting with cloth napkins and crisp tablecloth supporting the items that would showcase a feast. When looking back they were probably very simple and

may not have all matched but at the time but for a 6 year old they were just perfect and somehow magical.

When the rest of my family arrived, the noodles and dumplings were dropped into the pot, and once they were in for a few minutes, the fresh chicken was placed into the pot then carried to the table to be ladled out into our bowls. The smell was unforgettable and the taste divine, and I haven't even started on how good those fresh buns were that were served along with the soup. All of this for us and it made me feel very special, and this would happen every second Sunday when we visited.

So, this is why I go grocery shopping and this why I spend an enormous amount of time creating special meals for my family and friends, Many of those creations were recipes handed down to me by my Nanny.